

## COOL SPRINGS ALLERGY ASSOCIATES

1. YOU HAVE COMPLETED SKIN TESTING: After the application of the tests you may experience local reactions of swelling and itching at the test sites. The reactions usually go away within a few hours. However, some people may experience "delayed reactions" for a few days.

If this occurs:

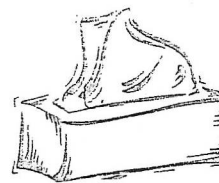
- (1) Take an antihistamine regularly as directed until the reaction resolves.
- (2) If you are not taking a prescribed antihistamine, take Benadryl 25mg capsules every 4-6 hours until the reaction resolves. (Benadryl may be purchased over the counter and may cause drowsiness.)
- (3) Apply 1 % Hydrocortisone cream to the reaction site every 6 hours until the reaction has cleared.
- (4) Apply ice packs for 10 minutes every 1-2 hours as often as needed.

2. IF YOU HAVE ELECTED TO HAVE IMMUNOTHERAPY (Allergy Injections:)

- (1) Your allergy extract for your injections will be mixed for your specific allergies.
- (2) Please allow 3 weeks for your extract to be mixed.
- (3) If an appointment has not already been made for you, we will call when the extracts are ready and schedule your First Injection.
- (4) The First Injection must be given in our office. After this, your injections may be given in the clinic of your choice as long as there is a doctor on the premises.
- (5) Allow at least 1 hour for your First Injection. There is information for you to read and you must wait 30 minutes after your injection.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

THANK YOU!



## Sinusitis: When it's more than a cold

"It's just a cold," you say to yourself. "It will be gone in a few days."

But when your face still hurts, your nose is still stuffy and you still have that nasty cough a week later, you could have something more serious—sinusitis.

Sinusitis affects more than 31 million Americans. Untreated, it can be unbearable and lead to missed work days and sleepless nights.

### What is sinusitis?

Sinusitis is an inflammation (swelling) of the lining inside the sinuses—air-filled spaces in the bones that are around the eyes and behind the nose. The sinuses warm, moisten and filter the air in the nasal cavity.

When sinuses become blocked and fill with fluid, germs can grow and make you sick. Blocked sinuses can be caused by the common cold, "hay fever" or nasal polyps (small lumps inside the nose). Sinusitis can happen once in a while, or keep happening for a long period of time.

### Common symptoms of sinusitis include:

- Plugged-up nose
- Facial swelling
- Tiredness
- Nasal drainage
- Cough
- Bad tasting post-nasal drip
- Head congestion/headache
- Toothache
- Fever

### To help sinusitis symptoms:

- Take your medications as prescribed. Do not take more than the directions say. If you are prescribed antibiotics, finish all of the medicine.
- Breathe in steam
- Use hot packs for facial pain
- Increase fluid intake

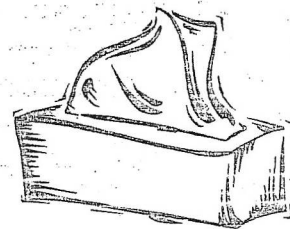
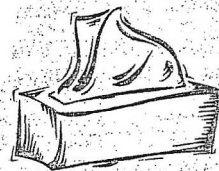
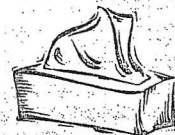
### Sinusitis treatments

A sinus infection is commonly treated with a combination of medicines, such as an antibiotic to control the bacterial infection and a nasal steroid to reduce swelling. For patients who suffer from chronic sinusitis due to allergies, immunotherapy (otherwise known as allergy shots), may help to reduce allergic reactions. Using nasal sprays and washes when nasal symptoms strike, also may help people with chronic sinusitis.

Several non-drug treatments can be helpful, such as breathing in hot, moist air; applying hot packs; and washing the nasal cavities with salt water. The symptoms of sinusitis and severity can vary from person to person. Talk to your doctor right away if you develop any sinusitis symptoms.

Structural problems in the nose—such as narrow drainage passages, tumors or polyps, or a deviated nasal septum (the wall between the left and right sides of the nose)—may be another cause of sinusitis. Surgery is sometimes needed to correct these problems. Many patients with recurring or chronic sinusitis have more than one physical factor that makes them susceptible to infection, so addressing only one factor may not be enough to adequately treat the condition.

If you think you have sinusitis, please consult with an allergist/immunologist. To find an allergist/immunologist in your area or to find additional information on sinusitis, call the AAAAI's Physician Referral and Information Line at (800) 822-2762.



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For more information on sinusitis, check out the Patients & Consumers Center of the AAAAI's Web site, [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org), or read the information provided by the AAAAI's Sinusitis Committee on the condition at <http://www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/sinusitis/default.stm>.

# Patient Update

## Finding relief: Immunotherapy can change your life

Does it seem like your allergy symptoms never stop bothering you? Your life is constantly being disrupted by your runny nose, those itchy, watery eyes and the wheezing that just never seems to go away. But alas, there is relief in sight! A technique called "immunotherapy" or "allergy shots" can help alleviate symptoms caused by allergies.

By participating in and completing an immunotherapy program, you can dramatically reduce your allergy symptoms.

### How immunotherapy works

Immunotherapy is an effective vaccination program that can increase your immunity to substances called allergens. Allergens are what trigger symptoms. The program begins by giving injections of gradually increasing amounts of an allergen to a patient over several months.

Allergen immunotherapy works like a vaccination. Through your body's exposure to small, injected amounts of a particular allergen, in gradually increasing doses, your body builds up immunity to the allergen(s) to which you are allergic. This means that when you encounter these allergens in the future, you will have a reduced or very minor allergic response and fewer symptoms.

If you begin allergen immunotherapy treatment, it is very important to continue your injections on a regular basis until the treatment is completed. Otherwise, the treatment will not be beneficial. Generally, patients receive injections for three to five years or longer. After that, their sensitivity to the particular allergen is re-

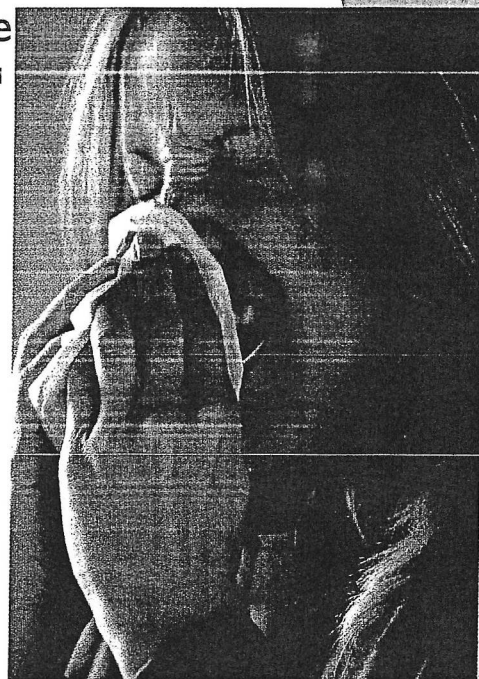
duced, often for years following discontinuation of therapy.

### Benefits of immunotherapy

Allergen immunotherapy treatment is considered when allergy symptoms are moderate to severe, occur throughout most of the year, do not respond adequately to medications, and are triggered by allergens that are not easily avoided, such as pollens or house dust mites.

Patients with "unavoidable" allergens, such as grass or ragweed, may experience the intolerable symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, itchy and red eyes during the spring and fall. It is impossible, or impractical, for the patient to completely avoid these common, airborne allergens. Although some steps can be taken to relieve symptoms, such as medications and staying indoors, they are only temporary and will not alleviate the condition year round.

The initial treatment is very frequent, resulting in many trips to the allergist/immunologist office. In addition to this, you will be required to stay in the office for 20 minutes after your injections. This is purely for your safety, as the physician will want you there in case of an adverse reaction to the shot. Some patients also develop swelling at the site of injection. These "local reactions" can be resolved with oral antihistamines, ice packs or an adjust-



ment of the dose given.

The positive side of immunotherapy outweighs the time involved in most cases. For some individuals, immunotherapy can provide relief and a way of life that would never have been possible previously.

If you believe immunotherapy could be beneficial to you, you should be examined by an allergist/immunologist. To find an allergist/immunologist in your area or to find additional information on allergy shots, call the AAAAI's Physician Referral and Information Line at (800) 822-2762.

### Benefits of immunotherapy:

- Reduced symptoms throughout the year
- Less severe reactions when exposed to an allergen
- A more care-free life

For more information on immunotherapy, visit the Patients and Consumers Center of the AAAAI's Web site, [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

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## **HAY FEVER (ALLERGIC RHINITIS)**

### **WHAT IS IT?**

Allergic Rhinitis is the medical term for an inflammation of the lining of the nose caused by an allergy. When this problem occurs only during certain seasons, it is called seasonal allergic rhinitis, or hay fever. When it occurs year round, it is called perennial allergic rhinitis. Here, we will just call it hay fever to make the reading easier.

Hay fever causes itching of the nose and eyes, and sometimes of the throat and inside the ears. Sneezing, sniffing, runny nose, and post nasal drip appear. The person with hay fever is often very uncomfortable.

### **WHAT CAUSES IT?**

Like other allergies, hay fever is an abnormal reaction to a substance which causes no trouble for other people. No one knows why some people react while others do not, but we do know that allergies tend to run in families. In the case of hay fever, pollen is the substance to which persons react. In the case of year round rhinitis, the problem is usually many substances, including pollen, dust, mold, mildew, and animals.

### **WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS WITH HAY FEVER?**

If the problem begins in childhood, most people (80%) will have it for the rest of their lives. Once it begins, hay fever tends to get worse each year until it reaches a certain level. It will then remain at that level throughout life unless it is treated. The level it reaches depends on many factors and varies from person to person.

### **WHAT PROBLEMS CAN OCCUR?**

These patients have more sore throats, ear infections, bad colds, and other respiratory infections than do other people. Headaches, coughing, and infections can develop. There may be a loss of smell or taste. Fluid can build up in the ear and cause a problem called serous otitis media, or middle ear irritation. Hearing loss can result. Many people with this problem become addicted to nose drops.

### **WHAT MAKES IT WORSE?**

Being around the substances (allergens) to which you are allergic will always make it worse. Other things such as changes in the weather, sudden chilling, being around tobacco smoke or other fumes and odors, and breathing cold air can also make it worse.

### **WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?**

Avoiding the things you are allergic to is the very best way to help yourself. When this is not possible, you should follow your doctor's advice about treatment and medications. When properly treated, the vast majority of people with hay fever will get relief. Proper treatment includes avoidance of allergens, taking allergy shots, and medications.

## POLLENS

The major pollens for MIDDLE TENNESSEE are shown below under the peak months.

**TREES:** FEB-APR. = Elm, Red Cedar

MAR-MAY = Ash, Birch, Poplar, Red Maple

MAR-JUL = Cottonwood, Box Elder

APR-MAY = Beech, Hackberry, Sycamore

APR-JUN = Blk. Locust, Hickory, Mulberry, Oak, Blk. Walnut (locust has heavy pollen which is not air borne)

**GRASSES:** APR-SEPT = Bermuda, Rye

MAY-OCT = Ky. Blue, M. Fescue, Orchard, Red Top, Timothy

JUL-OCT = Johnson

**WEEDS:** APR-JUN = Sheep Sorrell

MAY-OCT = Eng. Plantain, Lambs Quarter

JUL-SEPT = Cocklebur, Kochia, Nettle, Pigweed, Russian Thistle, Sage

AUG-OCT = Marsh Elder, Ragweeds

### TO DECREASE EXPOSURE TO POLLENS:

1. Keep the windows in the house closed at all times, especially in your bedroom.
2. It is best to operate your air conditioning or heating system year round. It acts as a filter for the pollen, helping to keep pollen at a minimum.
3. The only time to avoid being outside is when the grass is cut. If this is not possible, or if you must cut the grass, be sure and wear a pollen mask.
4. After being exposed to a lot of pollen, be sure to shower and wash your hair. The clothes you had on should not be kept in your bedroom. These two things are very important because your hair and clothes retain pollen.
5. Routinely shampoo your hair before going to bed each night during pollen seasons.
6. IF YOU ARE TAKING ALLERGY SHOTS, DOSAGE ADJUSTMENT MAY BE NECESSARY DURING POLLEN SEASONS.